UNITED NATIONS

HRI

International Human Rights Instruments

Distr.
GENERAL

HRI/CORE/1/Add.64/Rev.1
25 June 1998

Original: ENGLISH

# CORE DOCUMENT FORMING PART OF THE REPORTS OF STATES PARTIES

## BARBADOS

[12 September 1996]

CONTENTS


| | | Paragraphs | Page |
|---|---|---|---|
| I. | LAND AND PEOPLE | 1 - 18 | 2 |
| II. | GENERAL POLITICAL STRUCTURE | 19 - 42 | 5 |
| III. | GENERAL LEGAL FRAMEWORK WITHIN WHICH HUMAN RIGHTS ARE PROTECTED | 43 - 50 | 9 |
| IV. | REMEDIAL AUTHORITY WITH RESPECT TO HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS | 51 - 58 | 11 |
| V. | INFORMATION AND PUBLICITY | 59 - 64 | 13 |


GE.98-16644 (E)

## I. LAND AND PEOPLE

1. Barbados (area: 430 sq km) is the most easterly of the Caribbean islands, located at 13° 10' north and 59° 35' west. The island lies 435 kilometres north-east of Venezuela. Barbados is 34 kilometres long by 23 kilometres wide, and is of mainly coral formation, except for the eastern district called the Scotland District. Barbados is relatively flat, rising from the west coast in a series of terraces to a ridge in the centre. The highest point is Mount Hillaby, 340 metres above sea level.

2. Barbados has a tropical climate. Temperatures seldom fall below 20° Centigrade or rise above 31° Centigrade. Annual rainfall averages 1,254 mm at sea level to 1,650 mm at the highest point.

3. The coast largely consists of long stretches of "ivory" beaches. The recreational and economic value of these beaches and the marine reserves have made tourism one of the island's chief income-generating services contributing some 14 per cent to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for 1994 at nominal value (Ministry of Finance Statistics, 1995).

4. Barbados is one of the most densely populated islands in the world with a population of 264,379 persons and a population density of 1,592.7 per square mile (1994, mid-year estimate). For administrative purposes the island is divided into 11 parishes with the capital, Bridgetown, situated in the parish of St. Michael. The parishes of St. Michael and Christ Church are the more significantly developed and populated areas in the island representing 41.6 per cent of the population (1990 population census).

5. The population's annual growth is 0.3 per cent and there is an average life expectancy of 72.9 years for males and 77.4 years for females. The number of children under the age of 18 years is 73,184 or 29.6 per cent of the population (1990 population census).

6. With regard to the male/female distribution in the population, 52.1 per cent or 137,739 are females and 47.9 per cent or 126,640 are males (Barbados Statistical Service, 1994 mid-year estimate).

7. Despite the island's dense population, Barbados was rated number 1 among developing countries and number 20 globally on the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Index. This index measures literacy, life expectancy and per capita income. Barbados also has one of the highest per capita incomes in the Caribbean, which was estimated at BDS$ 11,100 for 1994 and a provisional estimate of Gross Domestic Product at factor cost of BDS$ 2,924 for 1994. The rate of inflation for 1994 was 0.1 per cent and the average annual rate of inflation for the period 1991-1994 was 3.4 per cent. Barbados had an external debt of 644.9 million Barbados dollars at the period ending December 1994 and a rate of unemployment of 21 per cent (Central Bank of Barbados, Economic and Financial Statistics, February 1995).

8. Barbados is a Small Island Developing State (SIDS), which has a fragile natural resource base and an open economy with a narrow range of exports and a

heavy dependence on imported goods. Its main foreign currency earners are the sugar industry, the tourism industry, manufacturing, banking, the off-shore sector and agricultural activities.

9. The period 1990-1992 represented an economic challenge to Barbados, since there was a significant decline in output for that period. Consequently, the level of real GDP in 1992 was lower than in 1986.

10. During the fiscal year 1990/91 the country was faced with serious domestic and external imbalances which necessitated the introduction of a stabilization programme with the assistance of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). This programme included contractile fiscal and monetary measures which resulted in a reduction of the public service and generally high rates of unemployment. On a positive note, the stabilization measures were successful in reducing the imbalances.

Table 1. Gross domestic product at factor cost (BDS$ 000) 1989-1993

| Year | GDP factor cost |
|---|---|
| 1989 | 2 909.6 |
| 1990 | 2 965.2 |
| 1991 | 2 893.3 |
| 1992 | 2 697.3 |
| 1993 | 2 770.5 |
| 1994* | 2 924.0 |

Source: Barbados Statistical Service.

* Provisional estimates.

Table 2. Annual rates of inflation based on the retail price index charges (March 1980 = 100)

| Year | Rate per cent |
|---|---|
| 1989 | 6.2 |
| 1990 | 3.1 |
| 1991 | 6.3 |
| 1992 | 6.1 |
| 1993 | 1.1 |
| 1994 | 0.1 |

Source: Barbados Statistical Service.

Table 3. External debt at December for period 1989-1994 (BDS$ millions)

| Year | Debt |
|---|---|
| 1989 | 852.8 |
| 1990 | 859.4 |
| 1991 | 834.4 |
| 1992 | 755.0 |
| 1993 | 704.6 |
| 1994 | 644.9 |

Source: Central Bank of Barbados, Economic and Financial Statistics.

11. Religion is the cornerstone of Barbadian life and this is reflected in the numerous denominations which can be found throughout the island. Of these the Anglican, Pentecostal and Methodist denominations are the most significant groups.

12. With respect to future economic development, emphasis is being placed on skill-intensive activities in both the industrial and services sectors as well as on increasing productivity in all sectors. Education is an important factor in this direction. Special attention should be given to young persons from low-income households in order to afford them the opportunity to improve the quality of their lives.

13. The largest ethnic group in Barbados is Afro-Caribbean, descendants of the slaves brought across from the west coast of Africa during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. A small but important minority of persons are Euro-Caribbean, descendants of the indentured servants, planters and other European migrants to Barbados since its colonization by the British in the seventeenth century. Other population groupings are smaller and generally newer to Barbados.

14. Barbados comprises six distinct ethnic groups. Approximately 92.5 per cent of the population is of African descent and the remaining 7.5 per cent is of European, East Indian, Chinese, Syrian/Lebanese and mixed ancestry (Barbados Statistical Service, 1990).

15. Education is very important to the development of Barbados. Consequently, the island has a high literacy rate of 98 per cent in the primary school population (Ministry of Education Statistics 1995). The UNDP Human Development Report (1991) lists the adult literacy rate as 99 per cent.

16. The official language of Barbados is English and education is compulsory from ages 5 to 16 years (Education Act, chap. 41). Education facilities can be found in all of the 11 parishes for children as well as adults. The facilities are made available by the Government and the private sector.

17. There is no clear distinction between the rural and urban areas in Barbados. This is due mainly to the size of the island, topography, well developed communication network of paved roads, bus service and efficient telecommunications services. Consequently, persons living in "rural" sectors have as much access to goods and services as those of the "urban" areas. There is also a clear water supply available to ninety-nine point six per cent (99.6 per cent) of the Barbadian population according to a Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) report 1988.

18. The "urban" areas tend to be more densely populated, however, the "rural" areas can still boast of vibrant community activities. This is a result of the new housing patterns for both low and middle-income families which are further eroding the lines which might separate "rural" and "urban" sectors.

## II. GENERAL POLITICAL STRUCTURE

### A. Political history and framework

19. The Colony of Barbados was founded by the British in 1627 and remained British, without changing hands, until independence in 1966.

20. Barbados is a former British Colony. It became an independent country on 30 November 1966, and since then it has remained a member of the Commonwealth. Constitutionally, the British Monarch continues to be the Head of State and this Monarch is represented on the island by the Governor-General who is appointed on the advice of the Prime Minister (Constitution, 1966).

21. Archaeological evidence indicates that prior to 1627 the island had been inhabited by Arawak and Carib Amerindians. Early British settlers first grew tobacco and cotton, but found this unprofitable, and switched to sugar cane as early as 1637. The switch from tobacco and cotton to sugar is one of the most important events in Barbadian history. Labour- and capital-intensive, the cultivation of sugar caused the consolidation of small farms into larger plantations, then the large-scale importation from Africa of slave labour.

22. The next major change in Barbados' history was the emancipation of the slaves in 1838. The nineteenth century was marked by instability in the dominant sugar industry, first challenged by the end of slavery, then by the equalization of sugar duties for British and foreign sugars imported into Britain in 1852, competition from beet sugar producers, and the fall in sugar prices. For the majority Afro-Barbadian population, working conditions, even after emancipation, continued to be harsh. Unlike larger West Indian colonies where land was available for small farming by individuals, Barbados was small and densely populated and available arable land expensive and scarce. A large proportion of the working population was forced to continue working on the plantations at very low wages. By 1896, widespread economic distress and social unrest prompted investigations by a Royal Commission. The seminal riots of 1937 prompted another commission of inquiry from Britain which, amongst other things, recommended the legalization of trade unions. By 1950, with the growing momentum of decolonization, universal adult suffrage was introduced. Ministerial government followed in 1954. By this time the

political class had become increasingly representative of Barbados' demographic distribution. Encouraged by Britain, the colonies of the British West Indies formed a Federation in 1958. The failure of the Federation in 1962 precipitated the movement towards individual independence for the colonies, which Barbados attained in 1966.

23. The years since independence have been marked by a steady increase in standards of living, a succession of exemplary elections and changes of government, universal, free and compulsory primary and secondary education and free tertiary education, and a diversification of revenue sources to include tourism, light manufacturing and informatics.

24. Barbados has a long tradition of parliamentary procedure, dating back to 1639 when the first Parliament was established. Until 1950, when universal adult suffrage was introduced, franchise was based on gender (only men) and wealth (a certain yearly income level or property). The organized political awakening of the majority Afro-Barbadian community can be traced to the inter-war years, when one of the first popular political parties, the Democratic League, was established. The seminal social unrest of 1937 precipitated the creation of trade unions and the first modern-type political party, the Barbados Labour Party, which is still extant today and which won the elections of 1994. The Democratic Labour Party was formed in the 1950s as an offshoot of the BLP, and in 1989, the National Democratic Party was formed as an offshoot of the Democratic Labour Party. Since independence, the major political parties have had alternating stints in office:

| | |
|---|---|
| 1966-1976 | two Democratic Labour Party terms |
| 1976-1986 | two Barbados Labour Party terms |
| 1986-1994 | two Democratic Labour Party terms |
| 1994- | Barbados Labour Party. |

## B. Principal organs of the Constitution

### 1. The Executive

25. The Constitution recognizes the system of government which is based on universal adult suffrage and characterized by regularly held elections. The electoral system is patterned after the British Westminster system. This system is multi-party and allows for the election of a Prime Minister as the Head of Government, who may serve a term of five (5) years and may be re-elected.

26. Section 35 of the Constitution states: "There shall be a Parliament of Barbados which shall consist of Her Majesty, a Senate, and a House of Assembly." Section 63 (1) of the Constitution states: "The Executive Authority of Barbados is vested in Her Majesty."

27. The Queen is the head of State of Barbados. The Queen of England is also the Queen of Barbados. The Queen is represented in Barbados by the Governor-General whom she names (on the advice of the Prime Minister). The Queen does not take part, however, in the Government of the country.

The Prime Minister

28. At the end of the General Election, the Governor-General sends for the person whom she considers best able to command a majority of the members of the House of Assembly. In practice this is usually the leader of the party which has won the highest number of seats. Section 66 (2) of the Constitution gives great power to the Prime Minister, and protects him from dissatisfied party supporters who may consider revolting and having his appointment revoked. If a majority of Parliament supports a no-confidence motion in the Prime Minister, he may, within three days of the passing of the resolution, either resign or ask the Governor-General to dissolve Parliament, thereby precipitating a General Election.

Ministers

29. The Constitution provides for a minimum of five ministers who are selected from either the House of Assembly or the Senate.

30. Section 72 of the Constitution makes provision for the appointment of an Attorney-General. Although the Constitution does not require the Attorney-General to have any particular qualifications, an attorney at law is invariably appointed. He is the principal legal adviser to the Government.

31. The Cabinet is the body having overall responsibility for the management of the Government. Section 64 (2) of the Constitution states: "The Cabinet shall be the principal instrument of policy and shall be charged with the general direction and control of the Government of Barbados and shall be collectively responsible therefor to Parliament."

The Governor-General

32. Section 28 of the Constitution provides that: "There shall be a Governor-General of Barbados who shall be appointed by Her Majesty and shall hold office during Her Majesty's pleasure and who shall be her Majesty's representative in Barbados."

33. The majority of the Governor-General's functions are ceremonial such as conferring honours and receiving ambassadors. The real power of Government is in the hands of the Prime Minister and his Cabinet. As a rule, the Governor-General exercises her function on the advice of the Prime Minister, the Cabinet and, in some specified cases, the Leader of the Opposition. The Constitution provides specifically that the Governor-General must act on the advice of the Prime Minister in, inter alia, the following cases:

(a) Appointing and removing ministers of Government;

(b) Appointing of 12 members of the Senate;

(c) Dissolving Parliament;

(d) Appointing the Chief Justice and High Court judges.

## 2. The Legislature

34. Barbados has a bicameral legislature: the House of Assembly, composed of 28 members elected by universal adult suffrage who represent the 28 constituencies into which the island is divided for electoral purposes. The Senate consists of 21 members made up as follows:

(a) Twelve members appointed by the Governor-General on the advice of the Prime Minister;

(b) Two members appointed by the Governor-General on the advice of the Leader of the Opposition;

(c) Seven members appointed by the Governor-General at her discretion to represent religious, social, economic or such other interests as the Governor-General may consider ought to be represented.

35. The Constitution recognizes the office of the Leader of the Opposition and confers certain power upon him. If the Leader of the Opposition loses the support of the majority of parliamentarians who oppose the Government, he loses his function as Leader. In 1989, four members of the governing party broke away and formed their own party. The incumbent Leader of the Opposition commanded only three parliamentarians and was thus replaced.

36. Section 48 (1) of the Constitution states: "Subject to the provisions of this Constitution, Parliament may make laws for the peace, order and good government of Barbados." Normally, for a bill to become law, it must be passed by the House of Assembly and the Senate and receive the approval of the Governor-General. While the Constitution gives the Governor-General the power to refuse approval, it is a convention that she would not normally refuse to approve a bill which has been passed in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution.

## 3. The Judiciary

37. The Constitution makes provision for the Superior Court. Section 80 of the Constitution provides for the establishment of the Supreme Court consisting of a High Court and a Court of Appeal. The judges are appointed by the Governor-General on the recommendation of the Prime Minister after consultation with the Leader of the Opposition. Once a judge has been appointed, he is not under the control of any person. Apart from leaving office as a result of reaching the age of retirement, it is difficult to remove a judge from office. A tribunal must be called by the Governor-General on the advice of the Prime Minister which must judge that he has committed an offence.

38. The courts have the power to review any law passed by Parliament to ensure that it conforms to the provisions of the Constitution.

39. In 1981, Parliament passed the Supreme Court Judicature Act which makes provision for a separate Court of Appeal comprising the Chief Justice as President and two other judges. Section 86 of the Constitution makes it possible for Barbados to share a Court of Appeal with any other Commonwealth country. At present, there exist three avenues of appeal outside of Barbados:

(a) To the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council (a committee of the British House of Lords);

(b) To the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (Barbados being a signatory to the American Convention on Human Rights);

(c) To the United Nations Human Rights Committee (Barbados being a signatory to both the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its Optional Protocol allowing for the appeal of individuals to the Committee).

### 4. Other organs of Government

40. The Constitution makes provision for the establishment and composition of the Public Service Commission which deals with the appointment, promotion and discipline of public servants. Similar commissions exist which deal with the police and the Judiciary.

41. The Constitution makes provision for a Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) who is a public officer responsible for controlling criminal prosecutions. Acting on his own discretion he decides whether or not action should be taken against a person or whether such action, if commenced, should be discontinued. The DPP is appointed by the Governor-General acting on the recommendation of the Judicial and Legal Service Commission. Because of the importance of his position, the post is protected in the same manner as that of judges and, like them, his salary cannot be reduced while he holds office. The DPP can only be removed from office by a tribunal appointed by the Governor-General on the advice of the Judicial and Legal Service Commission.

42. The Constitution makes provision for an Auditor General who is responsible for auditing the accounts of all government departments at least once a year. Like the DPP, the Auditor General can only be removed by a specially appointed tribunal.

## III. GENERAL LEGAL FRAMEWORK WITHIN WHICH HUMAN RIGHTS ARE PROTECTED

43. The Constitution is the Supreme Law of Barbados, if any other law is inconsistent with the Constitution, the Constitution must prevail and the other law to the extent of the inconsistency will be declared void (chap. 1).

44. Chapter III of the Constitution deals with the protection of the fundamental rights and freedoms of all individuals in Barbados and in this regard, the fundamental human rights and freedoms of children are guaranteed.

In this Chapter it is stated in this way "Whereas every person in Barbados is entitled to the fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual, that is to say, the right, whatever his race, place of origin, political opinions, colour, creed or sex, but subject to respect for the rights and freedoms of others and for the public interest, to each and all of the following, namely:

(a) life, liberty and security of the person;

(b) protection for the privacy of his home and other property and from deprivation of property without compensation;

(c) the protection of the law; and

(d) freedom of conscience, of expression and of assembly and association."

45. Every individual has the constitutional right to seek redress of any violation of human rights before the High Court (Article 24, Constitution).

46. International human rights instruments cannot generally be invoked directly before the court. The constitutional system requires municipal legislation to be enacted by the Parliament of Barbados in order to incorporate International Conventions/Instruments into the national legal system. It is considered that the "Bill of Rights" included in Chapter III of the Constitution provides adequate safeguards for the protection of human rights.

47. The legal structure in Barbados provides for three (3) levels of adjudication, the Magistrate's Court, the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeal. The Court of Appeal hears cases from the Magistrate's Court and the Supreme Court. There is a Family Division of the High Court which deals with family matters. This court may seek the assistance of the relevant social services related to family matters.

48. If an individual believes that his/her rights have been violated there is redress in the legal system. The Constitution confers authority on the High Court to enforce the protection provisions of the Constitution, that is, the fundamental rights and freedoms which are guaranteed. Article 24 (1) states that if any person alleges that any of his/her fundamental rights and freedoms provisions "has been, is being, or is likely to be contravened" that person may apply to the High Court for redress. There are also social and therapeutic systems in place to facilitate the rehabilitation of the victim. These systems are discussed in further detail in the report.

49. The Constitution also confers wide discretionary powers on the High Court to grant remedies to an individual who alleges that any of his rights have been, are being or are likely to be infringed. This may include compensation. Article 24 (2) states that:

> "the High Court shall have original jurisdiction to hear and determine any application made by any person ..., and to determine any question

arising in the case of any person ..., and may make such orders, issue such writs and give such direction as it may consider appropriate for the purpose of enforcing or securing the enforcement of any of the provisions of Articles 12 to 23."

Articles 12 to 23 refer to the fundamental rights and freedoms protected by the Constitution.

50. Two (2) levels of appeal from a decision of a High Court are also available, to the Court of Appeal and to the Privy Council.

## IV. REMEDIAL AUTHORITY WITH RESPECT TO HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

### A. The courts

51. In Barbados there is no separate constitutional court dealing exclusively with alleged breaches of constitutionally protected human rights. If someone considers his human rights to have been violated, whether by Government, an individual or an organization, he can seek redress before the courts.

### B. The Constitution

52. Barbados' Constitution contains a bill of rights loosely following the Universal Declaration of Human Rights model, in which a number of basic freedoms are guaranteed: the right to life; the right to personal liberty; protection from slavery and forced labour; protection from inhuman treatment; protection from deprivation of property; protection against arbitrary search or entry; right to freedom of conscience; right to freedom of expression; right to freedom of assembly and association; right to freedom of movement; protection from discrimination on grounds of race, place of origin, political opinions, colour or creed; right to a fair trial and the presumption of innocence.

53. The Constitution states that any person alleging the violation of the above rights may apply to the High Court for redress, thus making the High Court the effective domestic guardian of human rights in Barbados.

### C. The Privy Council

54. Barbados' Supreme Court is the highest court in Barbados, but not the highest Barbadian court. Appellants can appeal to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council of the (British) House of Lords, which is in effect the court of final recourse for Barbados, and most countries of the Commonwealth.

### D. International human rights instruments

55. Barbados is a signatory to all the major international human rights instruments, including:

(a) Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery (1972);

(b) International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1972);

(c) Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons (1972);

(d) International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (and its Optional Protocol) (1973);

(e) International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1973);

(f) Convention on the Political Rights of Women (1973);

(g) Slavery Convention of 1926 as amended (1976);

(h) International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid (1979);

(i) Convention on the Nationality of Married Women (1979);

(j) Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages (1979);

(k) Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1980);

(l) Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1980);

(m) American Convention on Human Rights (1982);

(n) International Convention against Apartheid in Sports (1986);

(o) Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990).

## E. The Ombudsman

56. The Ombudsman Act (1981) establishes the office of Ombudsman, whose function, as defined by the Act, is to "investigate and report upon allegations of improper, unreasonable or inadequate administrative conduct". Like the Auditor General and the Director of Public Prosecutions, the Ombudsman cannot easily be removed from his post. A tribunal must be called by the Governor-General on the advice of the Prime Minister. The Ombudsman cannot be a member of either House of Parliament nor can he engage in any other occupation. Any complaints made to the Ombudsman must be made in writing and cannot be anonymous. Normally, he cannot investigate a case where the complainant has other legal means of redress. With some exceptions, the Ombudsman has the power to request any minister or officer of a government department or any other person to supply information which he considers necessary.

### F. Non-governmental organizations

57. There exists in Barbados a thriving non-governmental organization fraternity whose concerns tend to be specialized and which play an important role in both the stimulation of debate on human rights issues and active lobbying in favour of the people they represent and the rights relevant to them. Thus, there exist organizations such as: The Barbados Council for the Disabled; PAREDOS (Parent Education for Development in Barbados); The Women's Forum; The National Organisation of Women; The Barbados Environmental Association; The Barbados National Trust; The Barbados Family Planning Association; The Barbados Association for Mentally Retarded Children; The Barbados Association for the Blind and the Deaf; The Barbados Bar Association; The Barbados Red Cross Society; The Caribbean Policy Development Centre.

### G. The Bureau of Women's Affairs

58. The Bureau is responsible for policy elaboration and research in the area of women's rights and is responsible to the Minister for Community Development. Women have always played an important role in the socio-economic fabric of Barbados: as heads of households, in education, health care, the civil service and small businesses. Increasingly, women are occupying all levels of managerial positions within both the private and public sectors. The liberal professions and elected public offices too are increasingly occupied by women.

## V. INFORMATION AND PUBLICITY

59. The values and traditions of Barbados have for many years been steeped in the recognition of fundamental human rights such as the rights to freedom of expression, association and conscience. Awareness of human rights issues forms part of a strong, nationwide ethos of discussion and debate on all matters of concern to citizens. Various government departments whose work is connected with human rights make full use of the various information media, including the Government Information Service, to air issues, stimulate debate and increase awareness.

60. Copies of the Barbados Constitution are available to any person within the country. Copies may be acquired at a minimum cost and are also available in the national libraries, school institutions and other relevant government and non-governmental institutions.

61. The establishment of a number of commissions and task forces on various specific subjects has helped raise public awareness of human rights issues. The most recent of these are: Commission for Social Justice; Education Task Force; National Advisory Council on AIDS; Commission on Casino Gambling; National Task Force on the Aetiology of Crime.

62. Two human rights groups are very well known in Barbados, and do much to focus attention on the question of human rights. Amnesty International and Caribbean Human Rights Network have been active and vocal in, amongst other things, stimulating debate about the death penalty, sentencing, and prison conditions. Other non-governmental organizations play key roles in the debate on rights affecting specific groups.

63. The Government Information Service has the responsibility for preparing reports of national interest as well as any other relevant government departments/agencies. Fora are provided for debating issues of national concern. These may be organized by the Government or by non-governmental agencies. There is a large following to the radio call-in programmes which allow ordinary citizens to voice their opinions and concerns on any issue which might impact on their development or standing in society including their human rights.

64. Responsibility for human rights rests with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with considerable and consistent inputs from the Ministry of Home Affairs (which has responsibility for the Royal Barbados Police Force), the Attorney General's chambers, the Ministries of Health and Education in compiling reports. Regular dialogue and cooperation with local and regional human rights activists also take place.

---